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The Future of Security: Honors Thesis Project

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Considering the current economic situation and the need to improve or innovate services, public law enforcement agencies are finding that the private security industry has started to assume certain traditional police functions. This trend can be identified in various areas of the country where private security personnel perform duties ranging from school crossing guards (Flagstaff, Arizona) to unarmed residential patrols (North Barrington, Illinois). From the stereotyped uneducated and poorly trained person, security personnel have become more professional and organized. National research projects have focused on the private security industry and the tremendous changes and growth it has undergone in the past 20 years. With all of the research and recommendations for improvement, the field of private security is becoming a more respected profession. Some colleges and universities (such as S.I.U.C.) offer courses in security and some even offer private security as a specialization for a major area of study.

One of the aforementioned studies in particular is important to this "privatization" of public law enforcement phenomenon. This study, known as The Hallcrest Report, was published in 1985 and is important because one of its main focuses is the relationship between law enforcement and private security. In 1990 Hallcrest put out a follow-up study titled: Private Security Trends 1970-2000, otherwise known as The Hallcrest Report II. Both Hallcrest and Hallcrest II are one of the few sources available to obtain such data on private security and its

influence on public law enforcement. This phenomenon is significant because it is a reflection of our society. Security resources are being utilized in the public sector because of budgetary restraints and "the increasing prevalence of crime." (Sennewald, 1978: 12)

The concerns law enforcement executives have about controlling crime with the resources they currently possess, might be eased if they considered contracting out services performed by either current police officers or civilian personnel. Obviously, some of these services can be transferred to civilian (non-sworn) personnel. However, contracting out services from a private company may be more feasible from an economic standpoint because training and even benefits are usually provided by the company that is hiring out its services. From a students point of view, it is important to identify trends related to one's field of study. Reports, such as Hallcrest I and II, indicate the importance of the private security industry and what its impact will have on criminal justice personnel.

The main purpose of this project is to reinforce the current data available on private security use in the public sector, as well as identifying shifts in attitude toward the two fields working together. Although the Hallcrest reports already contain information similar to this project, it is important to monitor any changes in the criminal justice system. With the changes the world can go through in less than a year's time, it is easy to see the need for constant evaluations of trends. The results of

this study are intended to build on previous findings to support the need to recognize the importance of the private security industry. Also, to provide as a base for further in depth research. Students in criminal justice along with law enforcement practitioners, as well as those in security need to recognize the potential growth of police "privatization" and what effects it will have on crime, services, and the cost of handling them both.

METHODS

Two surveys were developed, one which was sent to law enforcement executives, the other to private security administrators. Both questionnaires asked the same questions with the exception being the wording of the first question (which was either directed to law enforcement personnel or those in private security), and response #3B, which had to be tailored to the respective professions. The questionnaires each contained 10 questions. The responses provided were either "yes", "no", or "maybe", except for questions #2 and #3 which options were provided solely to explain the respondent's reply for question #1. The questionnaire was devised to be as general as possible in order to achieve a high response rate and to cover the various topics that needed to be addressed. Question #1 was directed to either profession to elicit an interest (or not) in the idea of contracting out private security services for non-crime and non-emergency law enforcement functions. Questions #2 and #3 were

options to gain some insight to why these executives would participate or wouldn't in the contracting out of services. Question #4 was designed to include some variables to see if respondents who said "no" to question #1 would change their opinion about the use of private security in public policing. The fifth question dealt with crime control and police functions. This was used to see if the use of private security would have an impact in these situations. Question #6 dealt with police-community relations and if the use of a private agency would undermine this relationship. The seventh question was meant to be a prediction for the future of private security in the public sector. Question #8 was similar to question #7 because it was also a prediction of future use. The ninth question asked if there should be further research into this idea. Finally, question #10 pertained to the emphasis of private security studies for students of criminal justice and if it was ideal to do so.

Surveys were sent to executive members of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the American Society for Industrial Security. These two groups were chosen based upon their positions as administrators in their fields and their ability to dictate policies at this time. Furthermore, this was done to be similar with the Hallcrest Report surveys which also used executives in both professions. (Hallcrest II, 1990: 271) A total of 100 surveys were sent out. Fifty surveys were sent to I.A.C.P. members and 50 were sent to A.S.I.S. members. After four weeks the final response rate for public law enforcement

surveys was 52% and the final response rate for private security surveys was 54%. Again, based on the Hallcrest report, "Yes" and "Maybe" answers were combined because of what the Hallcrest report states as: "an indication of their willingness to discuss what is, after all, a radical departure from police traditions." (Hallcrest II, 1990: 271) A follow up letter was not sent at this time.

RESULTS

The responses from the surveys were coded and calculated separately. This means that the public law enforcement surveys were combined and processed aside of the private security surveys. This results in comparisons of both sides final responses. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the questions and a percentage of the responses.

TABLE 1

	<u>PUBLIC SECTOR</u>	<u>PRIVATE SECTOR</u>
1. Would participate in contracting out:	57.7% Yes	92.6% Yes
	42.3% No	7.4% No
2A. Fiscal Reasons:	42.0%*	59.0%*
2B. Improve Performance:	35.0%*	44.0%*

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

	<u>PUBLIC SECTOR</u>	<u>PRIVATE SECTOR</u>
2C. Free up for "real" police work:	42.0%*	33.0%*
2D. Other reasons:	12.0%*	11.0%*
3A. Never Consider it:	0.0%*	4.0%*
3B. Involvement in public sector (private):		0.0%*
3B. Worried about quality (public):	31.0%*	
3C. No reason to:	4.0%*	0.0%*
3D. Other reasons:	23.0%*	7.0%*
4. Legislation regulating private sector:	15.3% Yes	69.2% Yes
(Would then consider contracting?)	84.6% No	30.8% No
5. Improve crime control functions:	72.0% Yes	92.6% Yes
	28.0% No	7.4% No
6. Undermines police/community relations:	53.8% Yes	18.5% Yes
	46.2% No	81.5% No

7. Possible to assume total functions:	57.7% Yes	63.0% Yes
(Next 20 to 30 years.)	42.3% No	37.0% No

*(Note: These numbers have been rounded off.)

TABLE 1. CONTINUED

	<u>PUBLIC SECTOR</u>	<u>PRIVATE SECTOR</u>
8. Improvements in private, more ideal:	76.9% Yes	92.6% Yes
(For future utilization)	23.1% No	7.4% No
9. Consider further research:	76.9% Yes	96.3% Yes
	23.1% No	3.7% No
10. More Private Security Courses:	69.2% Yes	100% Yes
	30.8% No	0.0% No

As you can see, most respondents in the private sector are willing to participate in the contracting out of non-crime and non-emergency law enforcement functions. The public sector, on the other hand, was a bit more cautious with just over half

willing to contract out these services. The main reason why many of the public administrators said they would participate was because of fiscal reasons and the belief that officers need to have more time to do "real" police work. A good percentage of security executives also agreed in participating in the contracting out of services because of the same reasons. (The responses for questions #2 and #3 have high percentages because many of the respondents chose more than one selection. All answers were totaled and then averaged together.) Other reasons for choosing to participate in the contracting out of services included improved efficiency or performance of law enforcement. Those who answered "no" to question #1 cited a variety of reasons. A majority of the public agencies were worried about the quality of services that would be provided. Another main concern had to do with liability issues. Those who answered "no" to question #1 on the public side felt that liability issues and resources to meet the demand were reasons to decline. Some others felt that the police should be accountable to the public, not their (private security) agencies. Question #4 ran into some resistance probably because it was written in such a way that it was being interpreted as legislation giving police powers to the private security industry allowing them to perform total police functions. The question was supposed to mean that if there were to be more restrictions (accountability) placed on private security, would it then be considered to perform certain police functions, including some emergency and crime functions. Both sides seemed to agree upon that using private security effects

controlling crime and police functions. This must be related to the notion that using private agencies for non-crime services frees up the police to fight crime, therefore improving crime control.

Public law enforcement respondents were almost split on the issue that using private resources for some traditional police services erodes police-community relations. This may also relate to their reluctance to utilize private security service. Many of the comments written on the law enforcement surveys talked about the issue of "Community-Oriented Policing". Many police departments are currently emphasizing this style of policing, which includes a heavy emphasis of police-citizen interaction. The use of this type of policing style may be hampered by the contracting out or "privatization" of law enforcement services. However, there is not any data available to say that using private security resources would hinder police-community relations.

Question #7 asked to predict the future of private security in the law enforcement field. Over half the respondents from both surveys agreed that it is possible for private security to assume total law enforcement functions in certain areas within the next 20 to 30 years. Referring back to the Hallcrest II report, they agreed with a National Institute of Justice study (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1987) that "neither law enforcement nor most private security executives want to see contracting of total police functions." (Hallcrest II, 1990: 274) They did however, state that there was interest in contracting out of services for

non-crime functions. (Hallcrest II, 1990: 274) This project has also found an interest in the contracting out of services, especially those that are non-crime and non-emergency. It has also found that at least half of the respondents on both sides predict private security assuming total law enforcement functions within 30 years. A main concern that turned up in comments on the questionnaire, that the Hallcrest report mentions, and question #8 discusses, is the notion of poor training by the private security industry. However, major national studies done in recent years, including the Hallcrest report, show the improvements made in training and standards in private security. This brings up question #8 which mentions mandated improvements in private security and if then using private security would seem more appealing. In this case, the private security survey answers were the same as the rate for question #1 (96.2%), favoring the use of their industry in public policing. On the law enforcement side, there was more favorable support for the use of private security as opposed to the responses of question #1 (76.9% vs. 57.7%). This illustrates that although the private sector has made vast improvements over time, public agencies still see them as lacking in many respects. Possibly, in a few years, changes may improve to the point where both the security industry and law enforcement will have an even higher interest in use of security services for public policing. Question #9 deals with the issue of conducting further research into this concept. There was strong support on both ends to consider more research. Many of the comments suggested this to be a good idea in relation

to getting both sides to cooperate. However, concerns about funding, and who would be doing the funding is still an issue. The final question, dealing with emphasis on more private security curriculum, had some interesting responses. The private sector supported the need for more instruction 100% (88.9% yes, 11.1% maybe). The public executives felt a little less enthusiastic, only about 69% supporting the need for more instruction. This is surprising, because of the fact that many of these same executives feel that private security persons are poorly educated. Perhaps, maybe they feel an emphasis on private security (in school) is not necessary. Some comments made by police executives felt that students should be aware of these emerging police/security issues, but it doesn't require another field of study. Other comments felt that generally more emphasis on security is necessary nor is emphasis on criminal justice, they felt a more well-rounded education was more beneficial. The private security managers felt that there is more to criminal justice than just the police. In general, there were many positive and informative comments made by most of the respondents, some of the comments were biased, and some were very insightful. Basically, all of the comments provided an inside look to what executives in both areas think about this occurrence and where it may be heading in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the data gathered for this project and what other

research projects are indicating, there is a strong need to further study and support the use of private security, especially in the role of traditional police functions. The law enforcement profession cannot ignore any innovations that may improve the quality of service provided to the public. This country is built on the principal of the separation of powers, because of a fear of a strong central government. In a democracy such as ours, it is feasible to consider private industry performing established government functions. That is not to say that private industries should not be regulated, they must be, however it may prove to be more efficient to utilize these private resources. This study indicates that there is fairly strong support from both the private security industry and from public law enforcement for the contracting out of certain police services. There is also an indication for a stronger role to be played by private security in the future. Perhaps, someday there will be "hybrid" police departments, but that is an issue for future study.

Works Cited

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TABLE 1

	<u>PUBLIC SECTOR</u>	<u>PRIVATE SECTOR</u>
1. Would participate in contracting out:	57.7% Yes 42.3% No	92.6% Yes 7.4% No
2A. Fiscal reasons:	42.0%*	59.0%*
2B. Improve Performance:	35.0%*	44.0%*
2C. Free up for "real" police work:	42.0%*	33.0%*
2D. Other reasons:	12.0%*	11.0%*
3A. Never Consider it:	0.0%*	4.0%*
3B. Involvement in public sector (private):		0.0%*
3B. Worried about quality (public):	31.0%*	
3C. No reason to:	4.0%*	0.0%*
3D. Other reasons:	23.0%*	7.0%*
4. Legislation regulating private sector: (Would then consider contracting?)	15.3% Yes 84.6% No	69.2% Yes 30.8% No
5. Improve crime control functions:	72.0% Yes 28.0% No	92.6% Yes 7.4% No
6. Undermines police/community relations:	53.8% Yes 46.2% No	18.5% Yes 81.5% No
7. Possible to assume total functions: (Next 20 to 30 years.)	57.7% Yes 42.3% No	63.0% Yes 37.0% No
8. Improvements in private, more ideal: (For future utilization.)	76.9% Yes 23.1% No	92.6% Yes 7.4% No
9. Consider further research:	76.9% Yes 23.1% No	96.3% Yes 3.7% No
10. More private security courses:	69.2% Yes 30.8% No	100% Yes 0.0% No

*(Note: These numbers have been rounded off.)

FUTURE OF SECURITY SURVEY

Please circle response:

1. Considering your position as an administrator in public law enforcement, would you be willing to contract out services for certain public law enforcement functions (non-crime non-emergency)?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

2. If your response to question # 1 above was "yes" or "maybe", why?

- A) Fiscal reasons.
B) It could improve efficiency or performance of law enforcement.
C) Free up officers for "real" police work.
D) Other: _____

3. If you answered "no" to question # 1, why?

- A) Would never consider it.
B) Worried about quality and/or delivery of services.
C) Don't see any reason to.
D) Other: _____

4. If however, there was national legislation passed and/or court precedents putting more Constitutional restraints on private security, (such as the Bill of Rights pertaining to public law enforcement) would you consider using private security resources to perform traditional police functions (including crime and emergencies)?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

5. Do you believe using private security for police functions (non-emergency and non-crime) effect controlling crime and/or improve police functions?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

6. Do you believe using private security personnel for non-emergency tasks (such as taking incident reports) undermine police-community relations (citizens see the police as aloof)?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

7. In light of legislative trends, budgetary reductions, and/or a need for innovations in traditional law enforcement functions, is it possible for private security to assume total law enforcement functions in some jurisdictions in the next 20 to 30 years?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

8. Do you believe mandated improvements in training and professionalism for private security make it a more appealing option for future utilization in the public sector?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

9. Should executives in both private security and public law enforcement consider further research in using private security in public law enforcement?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

10. Should there be more emphasis on private security instruction or programs for students in Criminal Justice?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

Further comments: _____

THANK YOU

7. In light of legislative trends, budgetary reductions, and/or a need for innovations in traditional law enforcement functions, is it possible for private security to assume total law enforcement functions in some jurisdictions in the next 20 to 30 years?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

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YES NO MAYBE: _____

10. Should there be more emphasis on private security instruction or programs for students in Criminal Justice?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

Further comments: _____

THANK YOU

FUTURE OF SECURITY SURVEY

Please circle response:

1. Considering your position as an administrator in private security, would you be willing to participate in the contracting out of services for certain public law enforcement functions (non-crime non-emergency)?

YES NO MAYBE: _____

2. If your response to question # 1 above was "yes" or "maybe", why?

- A) Fiscal reasons.
B) It could improve efficiency or performance of law enforcement.
C) Free up officers for "real" police work.
D) Other: _____

3. If you answered "no" to question # 1, why?

- A) Would never consider it.
B) Worried about getting involved in public bureaucracy.
C) Don't see any reason to.
D) Other: _____

4. If however, there was national legislation passed and/or court precedents putting more Constitutional restraints on private security, (such as the Bill of Rights pertaining to public law enforcement) would you consider using private security resources to perform traditional police functions (including crime and emergencies)?

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